



## **Listening Project Report Executive Summary**

This project was an effort to identify the current student perceptions of needs, assets, barriers, and opportunities with regards to their educational experiences at AHS/SILSA. Data was disaggregated by race to identify differing experiences which might suggest the need for differing supports. The themes outlined below were supported by multiple questions and responses.

### **Students feel connected to teachers/staff and are positive about their overall experiences at AHS/SILSA.**

- Students of color and white students believe that their high school experiences are setting them up to meet their post-graduation goals. (page 3, #2)
- The majority of students of color and white students feel often or always successful at school. (page 4, #3)
- Students of color named AVID as a significant source of support and 90% of all students reported that they had an adult with whom they felt comfortable going to with issues outside of academic problems. (page 16, #11, #12)

### **Teachers and school personnel play a powerful role in the success of students of color.**

- Students of color named encouragement from school staff as the most powerful determinant in their decision to pursue AP/Honors classes and to take on leadership roles at school. A much smaller percentage of white students named teachers/staff as having the same level of influence. (Leadership page 6, #4b and AP/Honors page 11, #8 and 8a)
- This relationship is complicated by a perception that teacher expectations of students vary by race. Students of color most commonly answered that teachers' expectations for students of color are lower than those for white students. Students of color are split: 46% believe that teacher expectations have a positive impact on them and 36% believe they have a negative impact. 19% of students of color named teacher relationships as the reason students struggle. (page 12, #9a, 9b, 9c)
- Despite this complexity, students of color reported that they felt most comfortable and emotionally supported by teachers/staff; whereas, white students experience the greatest support from their peers. (page 16, #11)

**Students want more opportunities to develop interracial relationships and segregated classes may contribute to their discomfort. The disproportional representation of white students in AP/Honors classes and the lack of diversity in many classes are troubling to students.**

- White students and students of color agree that the least diverse places on campus are Honors and AP classes. Students' comments reveal a student perception that the predominance of white students in AP classes reinforces aversion to participating in these classes by students of color. All students agree that these classes could become more diverse with more encouragement from adults for students of color to participate in Honors/AP classes. (page 21, #18, 18a and page 23, #19)
- In addition to the need for teacher/staff encouragement, it appears that students of color may not see the value of AP/Honors courses in setting them up for achieving their goals to attend college, but white students did connect AP participation to college aspirations. (page 3, #2b, page 11, #8a )
- Most students believe that AHS/SILSA could become a more integrated place if students had more opportunities to develop relationships. Students want adults to intentionally create more opportunities to be together and to foster communication. (page 27, #23)

**There is a prevalent perception that there are not enough academic supports. In nearly every question regarding supports, and improving student learning and success, academic support is named as the top need to increase student success.**

- In multiple questions, students of color named greater academic assistance as their top need for increased support. 31% of students of color named increased academic support as the one thing that adults at school could do to help them learn more. Barriers to academic success were most frequently named by white students and students of color as their primary obstacles to success. (page 10, #7 and page 16, #13, and page 17, #14b, and page 19, #16)
- Students of color and white students overwhelmingly agree that learning is more relevant when they understand the way in which the learning will benefit them in the future. (page 9, #6)

**Nearly all students reported that they have an adult they can talk to on campus, but increased emotional support was frequently named as a significant need.**

- Nearly all students of color and white students said they had an adult on campus they could talk to. (page 16, #11)
- Students of color report feeling less supported by their peers, and more exposed to negative influences. (page 16, #11 and #12)
- More white students identified a need for more counselors and emotional support than students of color. White students named a need for counselors to talk to students more, and to be more available. White students named a need for more counselors as their

most frequent suggestion of the supports they would add to the school. (page 18, #15 and 15b and page 19, #16 and 16b)

- In multiple questions, students of color named more academic supports and more emotional supports as needed at nearly the same rate. (page 17, #14b and page 18, #16)

**Students are ready to talk about race, and to talk with each other.**

- Currently, students do not think that the contributions, histories, and cultures of various races are balanced. (page 24, #20 and page 25, #21)
- Most students believe that AHS/SILSA could become a more integrated place if students had more opportunities to develop relationships. Students want adults to intentionally create more opportunities to be together and to foster communication. (page 27, #23)
- Students of color and white students identified student-outreach as a key strategy for diversifying the leadership opportunities at school. (page 7, #4c)